Leicester, October 31, 1859.

Dear friend Webb;

I do not actually know the fact, but have no doubt that your Son Richard sailed from N. York last week; he wrote to Mr. Garrison, declaring his intention to do so, and (I think) saying that his passage was secured by one of the line of N. Yk. and Glasgow Ships. He will probably be with you before this reaches you. Tell him I depend on the fulfilment of his promise to write me, after he gets home. One expression in his note led some of us to think he was going in a sailing-ship - as he spoke of desiring a "fair wind" - but this is desirable even for a steamer, and I have little doubt that it was by a steamer that he went. We all send our love and best wishes to him.

We hear quite regularly from my Son Edward - who has been tarrying some time at Singapore, but is now, we suppose, at Hong Kong. Business in all the E. India ports has been and still remains very dull, and I begin to fear that E. will be foiled in his purpose of establishing himself out there. This I regret only because of its discouraging effect on him - it seems bad, I mean unfortunate, that a young man's first undertaking, on a considerable scale, should fail. We shall all most heartily rejoice to have him at home again.

I am not surprised at the hearty way in which you speak of S. J. May. I knew he was sure to be a favorite with you, & that he would commend himself to all who should see him. I feel very thankful that he was able to do so much A.S. work in G. Britain & Ireland, as he did, and hope he is not the worse in health for it; but your brief note of the 27th ult°. occasions us some apprehensions on that point. But we shall soon be able (as I hope) to judge for ourselves; for we may reasonably expect him to arrive within 3 or 4 days, - as we suppose he sailed for Boston on the 22d inst. Who wrote the letter about him, in the Advocate? I could not think of any one as likely to do it, but yourself, Mr. Webb, or Mr. Palmer. It is not in your style at all; so I refer it to one of the ladies. - He

seems to me better qualified, in some respects, to represent our Cause in England than any other person I know. But, on the whole, there is one I should much prefer, above him & all others - viz^t. W. L. Garrison himself.

I am sorry to tell you that G's health is very poor again. He says he has not been well since last February, when he attended a series of pretty laborious meetings in Eastern New York. His physician says he must absolutely refrain from all public speaking; and our Executive Committee, over a week ago, passed a formal vote - unanimously - advising and urging him to cease for a time all Anti-Slavery work and editorial occupation, & take a voyage for his health, remaining abroad awhile, & seeking to recruit his health by rest & diversion of mind. But he resists all advice & entreaty - "the undertaking is too great"; - He is always very sick on the sea, - and I doubt not the voyages, from & to home, are perfectly mountainous in his sight. Even if he could, as he now is, he could do no A.S. work - ought not to attempt to do any. But I shall continue to hope that his health will improve, and that he may be prevailed on to visit England again, and spend a long season of Anti-Slavery work there.

The papers doubtless will have told you into what consternation our Slaveholding States here, & especially Virginia, have been recently thrown by a very daring & extraordinary attempt, by a mere handful of men, to seize the United States armory & arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, at the border adjoining Maryland, with the avowed (and, doubtless, actual) purpose of setting free the Slaves, first in that vicinity, & afterwards in a wider

territory. Nothing has happened, for a long time, to excite the whole county indeed, so much. On the night of Saturday, Oct. 15th, a small, armed band of men, 22 in number only, quietly marched into Harper's Ferry, and without a show of resistance, possessed themselves of the Arsenal, & all the Government Workshops there. Setting a guard in that place, they proceeded to visit several neighboring farms, & summoned the slaves to join them, who did so, some willingly, the most (it is said) reluctantly, - took the masters prisoners, together with several prominent citizens of Harper's Ferry, & marched them all to the Arsenal. They also obtained complete possession of the whole town, a place of over 1000 inhabitants!, and no attempt at organized resistance was made there. They stopped the R. R. train (they afterwards confessed that this was a mistake), cut the telegraph wires, & endeavored to prevent the news from immediately spreading. But in vain. On Monday some companies of Virginia Militia, from the neighboring districts, marched into the place. They accomplished little or nothing, save to shoot at some stragglers, a portion of whom were unarmed, but endeavoring to escape. Soon after, troops arrived from Baltimore, and a large body of United States Marines from the Navy Yard at Washington. The latter officers of the ~~made~~ held a parley with the force in the Arsenal, ~~the~~ Who offered to leave if they could do so with their arms & prisoners, and have a few minutes clear time, when

they would release their prisoners in safety, and the troops them might pursue. But these terms were refused, and a violent attack made on the arsenal. The heavy gates were burst in, and after a brief fight the little party within were overcome, & killed or taken prisoners. One Marine only was shot.

The leader of this daring and desperate attempt was an old man, pretty well known here of late years, John Brown of Kansas. He was for many years a resident of the State of New York, where he reared a very large family. They were all earnest Anti-slavery men; and when the Kansas question arose, & a large rival emigration of men from the Free & Slave States rushed thither, to determine the question whether it should be a Free State, or a Slave State, old Brown & his sons were among the first to go thither. They settled on good ~~Farms~~ land, but were very soon set upon by the "Border Ruffians" of Missouri, who insulted them, stole from them, and at last killed one of Brown's sons, a young man. From that time, Brown's whole soul seemed to be on ~~fire~~ doing what he could against slavery. He organized a company, for protection against the 'Ruffians', and he soon made his very name a terror to those brutal men, who fled alarmed when they heard of his approach. In one of his expeditions, he drove out a band of these men from the town of Ossawatomie, routing them completely, and has since been known by the name of 'Ossawatomie Brown'. Little has been heard of him lately until this Harper's Ferry affair. In the contest there, two more sons of his were killed, and he himself badly wounded. The trial of the three or four prisoners is now going on. The Virginians are completely panic-stricken, and are conducting the trial in a most unheard-of way, and will doubtless hurry the prisoners the speediest execution which the forms of law there allow, and they allow anything the slaveholders want, as against their Slaves, and all who would set them free. Their ~~to~~ policy - as even the most pro-slavery journals of the North, such as the New York Journal of Commerce

are telling them — is to treat these men ~~with the~~ with ~~those~~ moderation, at least to spare their lives, and to inflict no greater punishment than imprisonment; but they are too much ~~excited~~ & alarmed & infuriated for this, & will doubtless have nothing short of their lives.. Brown has behaved with the utmost self-possession and dignity through the whole trial, and the unanimous testimony of all who have seen him from the beginning of the affair is that he has proved himself a man of great capacity, & cool judgment, & of indomitable spirit. Towards his prisoners, he was courteous & respectful. To all he proclaimed his purpose to be that of liberating the slaves; and he should touch no life or property, save what be deemed absolutely necessary to secure that end. His great mistake was in supposing that the Slaves of that section were bold enough to fight for liberty, and ready to fly to arms against their masters; besides, the news of his seizure of the arsenal could not possibly circulate among them rapidly, and they could not be sure, when they heard of it, ~~that~~ that the men were their friends. Had the Slaves risen in considerable numbers, and joined Brown as he evidently expected, none can foresee what would have been the issue of the contest — possibly a general Servile war would have ensued. For Brown had it not only in his power to distribute among them all the arms & ammunition of the U.S. armory at that place, but had collected in the neighborhood a large quantity of weapons, &c. among them, it is said, 1500 pikes or spears, for arming the slaves, not skilled in the use of fire-arms. It would seem that he had long been planning this attack. It was surely a very daring one, ~~for the most part~~ in many respects planned & executed with great judgment, & its secrecy well-kept; but it utterly failed, on account of defects obvious enough now, but which he seems to have been deceived about, or to have deceived himself. His plans appear even to have looked to seizing the reins of the United States Government, expelling Buchanan and his pro-slavery Cabinet, and setting up an Anti-Slavery Government! Alas, for his delusion! His object was a noble one; for if ever a resort to physical force and bloody means can be justified, it surely is so in the case of the Slaves of this country, & their friends.

Slavery i itself a continual state of War, Violenc
Bloodshed, and Cruelty insupportable, and i itself a rea
and a justification of any amount a kind of resistan
to it, according as one believes in one kind of resistan
another.

What the effect of thi daring, but unsuccessful, effor
against the Slave Power will be, it i too soon to say. Sor
Republicans
who are alarmed for their political success in the coming Pre
dential contest, predict all manner of evil. The Democratic
Party
Who is now nothing but, an appendage to the Slave Powers, an
ready for the most servile work, so they get the offices & them p
is in high spirits at the affair, believing they can make
the means of saving their Party, which they, ha
before quite despaired of. My own opinion i that if
the Republicans are such fools as to flinch before the
Slaveholders in thi matter, - apologize, and disavow
sympathy, & join in the execration of Brown, - they in
make themselves despised, & throw away their own
victory. Their duty is to throw every Proslavery taun
and menace back into the ranks from which they can
and plainly tell the Slaveholder that it i he, and
only, who i responsible for the attempt at Harpers
Ferry, - that it i his cruelty, fraud, & crime which
are bringing on him thi retribution, - that he i only
reaping, as he daily sows, and that the harvest i be
begun to be gathered in; that, if he persists in his
oppression, a terrible destruction must come upon him.
For, as Thomas Jefferson himself said, Virginian an
Slaveholder as he was, "I tremble for my country when I
remember that God i just, and that His justice cannot
sleep for ever; for one hour of the slave's bondage
fraught with more misery than ages of the oppression whe
our fathers rose in rebellion to throw off; and, in the conte
which must come, God has no attribute which can take
sides with the Slaveholder". Let the just issue be made u

(dating it Boston).

If you like to print the above sketch, you are very welcome
Excuse its defects, & amend as you please. - Kindest regards to all your
Sanborn